



July 8, 2020

Dear Pennsylvania Bar Exam Stakeholders:

I hope you, your families and your friends are well. I write on behalf of the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners with an update on plans for the next administration of the Pennsylvania bar exam.

As you know, we moved the in-person bar exam from the end of this month to the beginning of September with hopes that the course of the COVID-19 pandemic would allow us to administer an in-person exam safely at that later time. The best information from health authorities now compels us to conclude that it is unlikely we could do so.

Accordingly, there will be no second in-person Pennsylvania bar exam in 2020. Instead, the Board will administer a remote bar exam on October 5-7, 2020. We know there will be many questions and, in the coming weeks, the Board will post on its website ([www.pabarexam.org](http://www.pabarexam.org)) details about how the exam will be administered. We can share now certain general information:

- The essay sections will be administered on October 5 and 7, and the multistate bar exam (the “MBE”) will be administered on October 6. We will have a third testing day because the security measures attendant to a remote exam will require that we test in 45- or 90-minute segments with more breaks than in a usual, in-person exam. The dates of the exam are dictated in part by when the National Conference of Bar Examiners will offer the MBE.
- The MBE will include only 100 questions.
- All those who registered for the July/September exam will be automatically registered for the October exam.
- Success on the October exam will be treated the same as if the exam were in person for purposes of admission (*i.e.*, assuming satisfaction of other requirements, successful applicants will be fully admitted to the bar of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court).

We know that some will welcome this decision and others will not. Please know that we gathered significant information, considered the interests of all stakeholders and reviewed a number of options before choosing to offer the next bar



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exam remotely. Ultimately, we concluded that this is the best option to meet our mission of protecting the public; to allow us to offer another 2020 bar exam to as many applicants as possible; to provide certainty that most applicants will be able to take the exam this year; to reduce stress on applicants who would otherwise be confronted with taking an exam in person, with masks, in the midst of a pandemic; and to avoid unnecessary risk to the health of applicants, proctors and Board staff who would attend an in-person exam.

We know this has been a stressful time for 2020 bar applicants. We hope today's announcement will provide some greater certainty that there will be a safe and prompt opportunity for those people to take the bar exam and, we hope, gain admission. And, as always, we wish you all good health.

Very truly yours,



David R. Fine  
Chair